

Precious Moments

There are many moments of gold around this College; precious and spontaneous moments that just appear in the daily life of staff and students. They are windows into a community that is blessed to have such a diverse and integrated set of opportunities that have been built by the past, are stewarded by the present and shaped for the future.



One of many such moments emerged at the College Assembly last week when, of all things, a new World Record attempt was announced. As if that wasn't enough, the cause is centred on social justice which speaks to the primary impulse of the Society of Jesus and Jesuit schools. Over recent weeks, students in Year 10 have been engaged in the 'Dignity for Dollars' campaign, which has required the boys to create an original fundraising and awareness campaign to improve education outcomes in Timor Leste, which happens to be one of the poorest countries in the world. The quality of the projects was judged by senior personnel at Jesuit Mission, who commented:

"We were delighted with the level of creativity, enthusiasm and energy with which the students embraced Dignity for Dollars. Each group worked hard to understand the Timorese culture and the challenges Timor faces as a nation, [and] all groups successfully married the understanding in how they marketed to the Australian audience to garner interest and support."

Special congratulations are extended to Clayton Lie, Timothy Hurford, Alexander Weinress and Jameson Smith, who will be enlisting support for their World Record attempt in Term 4 to have 900 boys join them in forming the border shape of East Timor, so breaking the record by over 100 people. And, knowing the Riverview community, it is likely to go to well over 1,000 – each of whom will be asked to donate a gold coin to support the cause of education in East Timor. That will be a moment celebrate and one to look forward to.

Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, former parent and member of staff, visited the College during the week to speak to the boys in the First Nations program. While enjoying informal discussion with the boys during lunch, Malarndirri met some of our most recent arrivals who have settled quickly into the busy cadence of school life and are making very solid progress. When talking with Malarndirri and the boys, I was reminded of the significance of the First Nations program, which has seen over 100 boys graduate since it began back in the early 1990s. I am also reminded of the future, when we will see a nation that will eschew achievement by birthright and where the institutions of this country will allow all to thrive and gain access to the collective share of economic, political, cultural and moral capital. And who knows, in a generation or two (or maybe even sooner) we may see the first College Captain who is of First Nations' background, and beyond that, a Prime Minister who, like Barack Obama, becomes the first Indigenous figurehead of the nation. The latter may well be a boy who has been, is or will be a graduate of Riverview. Amid the seriousness of the discussion, one of our youngest boys – Graham Duckett, was enrobed with a blazer

belonging to one of our biggest boys – Viotangi Mafi. What a joy to behold.

Another of those unscripted moments, one that spoke equally to the future, was the arrival of a family of three boys from Inverell who toured the grounds and inspected the facilities of boarding. This particular family is one that is happy to be identified in advance: one keen to pursue the multifarious options that boarding and the educational program will provide. Moments such as these are portents for the future, snapshots into the growth and development of generations yet to come; moments of anticipation, of hope, of optimism, of confidence and trust in relationships that are yet to be forged. This is the Riverview story, one grounded in an illustrious past that was not quite apparent for those who entered it at the time, but one in retrospect that has yielded such appreciable growth for the boys and their families. To watch the excitement on these boys' faces and to consider all of that which lies ahead, is indeed a source of joy and a moment to savour.

After the demands of Trial Examinations that have spanned the last three weeks, students in the graduating class have returned for their final days at school. They emerged from the experience both strengthened and at times bruised by the realisation of what they will ultimately face, but very much wiser for being exposed to the environment that they will enter into fully early in Term four.



Over the coming weekend we have the opportunity to support the Indian Bazaar, which has been a feature of the College calendar since the middle of the 20th Century. All are encouraged to come along and enjoy the festivities of this occasion and contribute to the mission works of the Jesuits across South East Asia, which changes lives for those who live on the margins in the Third World. What are discretionary dollars in rich countries like Australia, are life changing circumstances on the ground in regions like Timor Leste. Hence, our current moments are inextricably linked to future moments for those who have so little but need so much.

As we move towards the latter stages of the term, let us enjoy the moments that make life the enigma, the challenge and the joy that it is. And as part of that, in the best of the Ignatian tradition, let us give thanks for the graces that are endowed on a daily basis to participate in what can sometimes seem to be the benign or the banal, but which are really blessings for today and hope for tomorrow.

Best wishes for the week ahead.